

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 11-24, 27, 29-41, 43-61, and 64 are currently pending. Claims 8-10, 25, 26, 28, 42, 62, and 63 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 27, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claims 1, 8-10, 24, 27, 28, 36, 45-50, and 64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,203,679, issued to Acebo et al. (hereinafter "Acebo et al.") in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,177,825, issued to Borders et al. (hereinafter "Borders et al."). Claims 2-7, 11, 12, 34, 35, and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0082877, to Schiff et al. (hereinafter "Schiff et al."). Claims 13, 29, and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,094,640, issued to Goheen (hereinafter "Goheen"). Claims 14-17 and 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al., Goheen, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,953,706, issued to Patel (hereinafter "Patel"). Claims 18, 19, and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al. and further in view of Patel. Claims 30-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al., further in view of Goheen, and further in view of Patel. Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al., further in view of Patel and further in view of Schiff et al. Claims 37-41, 56-58, 60, and 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,926,203, issued to Sehr (hereinafter "Sehr"). Claim 59 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al., further in view of Sehr and further in view of Patel. Claims 52-53 and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al., further in view of Patel, and Goheen, and further in view of Sehr. Claims 1, 4, 7, 11-14, 17, 18, 22, 27, 29-32, 34, 35, 37-40, 43, 48-51, 55, 56, 60, and 64 have been amended. No new matter has been added thereby. In view of the following remarks, applicants request reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-7, 11-24, 27, 29-41, 43-61, and 64.

A. Rejection of Claims 1, 27, and 50 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claims 1, 27, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claims 1, 27, and 50 have been amended, and the limitation “wherein the reservation items records do not correspond to an instance of an inventory item” does not appear in the claims. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 27, and 50 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, and allowance of the claims.

B. Rejection of Claims 1, 8-10, 24, 27, 28, 36, 45-50 and 64 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

As indicated above, Claims 1, 8-10, 24, 27, 28, 36, 45-50, and 64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acebo et al. in view of Borders et al.

1. Claims 1, 8-10, 24

Independent Claim 1 recites, in its entirety:

1. A method for processing reservation requests for one or more inventory items, the method comprising:

obtaining, by a computing device, a user request for reservation of one or more inventory items;

obtaining, by the computing device, inventory data corresponding to inventory items, wherein the inventory data is organized in accordance with a three-level hierarchy and wherein the three level hierarchy includes:

at least one group record defining a first level of detail for inventory information, wherein the first level of detail of each group record comprises information common to all item category records and inventory records below the group record in the hierarchy;

a set of item category records defining a second level of detail that is associated to a referenced group record and corresponds to types of inventory items for the referenced group, wherein the second level of detail of each item category record comprises information common to all inventory records below the item category record in the hierarchy; and

inventory records defining a third level of detail corresponding to instances of inventory item types referenced by the set of item category records, wherein the third level of detail of each inventory record in the hierarchy describes distinct inventory instances of item types than that of another inventory record;

matching, by the computing device, the user request for reservation of one or more inventory items with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting two or more instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request;

generating, by the computing device, the results of matching the reservation request with inventory data, wherein the results include:

a reservation transaction record corresponding to the user request for reservation;

one or more reservation item records based on the reservation transaction record and the matched inventory data; and

one or more reservation inventory records corresponding to instances of data of the matched inventory data; and

transmitting, by the computing device, results of the matching, which results are presented on a display.

Applicants respectfully submit that Acebo et al. and Borders et al., alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the limitations cited in amended Claim 1. Applicants agree with the Office Action that Acebo et al. fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in Claim 1. In particular, Acebo et al. fails to teach or suggest, in the context of other recitations of the claims, the limitation “matching, by the computing device, the user request for reservation of one or more inventory items with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting two or more instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Acebo et al. is generally directed to a travel reservation information management system. More specifically, Acebo et al. teaches a computer reservation system (CRS) that generates one or more potential travel itineraries for presentation to an agent, at least one of which is subsequently selected and booked by the agent. Acebo et al. does not teach or suggest organizing the inventory data in a three-level hierarchy, as claimed. According to the teachings of Acebo et al., information is only available in one level, that is, the complete travel itinerary. Without a three-level hierarchy for inventory data, Acebo et al. cannot, and does not, teach or suggest matching a user request for reservation with instances of inventory data from such a three-level hierarchy. According to the teachings of Acebo et al., the agent (rather than a computing device) may simply select a complete itinerary to reserve. However, the selected reservation does not relate to the actual instances of the inventory used by the traveler corresponding to the reservation. By way of non-limiting example, the teachings of Acebo et al. do not teach instances of specific hotel rooms with financial attributes or specific rental cars with financial attributes. The teachings of Acebo et al. are limited to more abstract reservation information (e.g., a reservation for a hotel) that still needs to be matched to actual inventory data. Therefore, Acebo et al. does not teach or suggest “matching, by the computing device, the user request for

reservation of one or more inventory items with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting two or more instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Applicants respectfully suggest that Borders et al. does not cure the deficiencies of Acebo et al. Although Borders et al. teaches a tiered hierarchical tree structure for managing product inventory, it fails to teach or disclose “matching, by the computing device, the user request for reservation of one or more inventory items with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting two or more instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request,” as recited in amended Claim 1. For example, according to the teachings of Borders et al., a 16-ounce Brand X potato chip bag corresponds to a SKU. While this reflects a type of chip, Borders et al. does not teach or suggest matching each instance of the specified Brand X bag of potato chips to a request for additional stock from a particular store. Such tracking would not be practical within the technical domain of the teachings of Borders et al. For example, a request for additional stock of 16-punce Brand X potato chips from a particular store would be fulfilled by providing a number of 16-ounce Brand X potato chips bags, without a matching of exact instances of those bags to select. In other words, the selection of SKUs is independent of the store request for stock. Therefore, Borders et al. does not teach or suggest “matching, by the computing device, the user request for reservation of one or more inventory items with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting two or more instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Under 35 U.S.C. § 103, the combined references must teach all of the limitations of the claim. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest at least the limitation “matching, by the computing device, the user request for reservation of one or more inventory items with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting two or more instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request,” as recited in amended Claim 1. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and allowance of the claim.

Claims 8-10 and 24 depend from Claim 1 and include all of the limitations of Claim 1, as well as other limitations of particular utility. For at least the reasons stated above in regard to

Claim 1, applicants submit that Claims 8-10 and 24 are patentably distinguished over Acebo et al. and Borders et al. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 8-10 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of the claims.

2. Claims 27, 28, 36, 45-50 and 64

Independent Claims 27, 50, and 64 recite, in their entirety:

27. A system for processing reservation of one or more inventory items, the system comprising:

at least one client computer operable to generate a request for reservation of at least one inventory item; and

a travel server configured to store inventory data corresponding to the at least one inventory item, the travel server configured to obtain the reservation request from the client computer, wherein the inventory data is organized in accordance with a three-level hierarchy and wherein the three-level hierarchy includes:

at least one group record defining a first level of detail for inventory information, wherein the first level of detail of each group record comprises information common to all item category records and inventory records below the group record in the hierarchy;

a set of item category records defining a second level of detail that is associated to a referenced group record and corresponds to types of inventory items for the referenced group, wherein the second level of detail of each item category record comprises information common to all inventory records below the item category record in the hierarchy; and

inventory records defining a third level of detail corresponding to instances of inventory item types referenced by the set of item category records, wherein the third level of detail of each inventory record in the hierarchy describes distinct inventory instances of item types than that of another inventory record;

wherein the travel server matches the request for reservation of at least one inventory item with the inventory data,

wherein matching includes selecting from instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request; and

generates the results of matching the request for reservation with inventory data, wherein the results include:

a reservation transaction record corresponding to the user request for reservation;

one or more reservation item records based on the reservation transaction record and the matched inventory data; and

one or more reservation inventory records corresponding to instance data of the matched inventory data.

50. A method for processing reservation requests for one or more inventory items, the method comprising:

obtaining by a computing device, multiple requests for a reservation action corresponding to at least one inventory item;

obtaining, by the computing device, inventory data corresponding to inventory items, wherein the inventory data is organized in accordance with a three-level hierarchy and wherein the three level hierarchy includes:

at least one group record defining a first level of detail for inventory information, wherein the first level of detail of each group record comprises information common to all item category records and inventory records below the group record in the hierarchy;

a set of item category records defining a second level of detail that is associated to a referenced group record and corresponds to types of inventory items for the referenced group, wherein the second level of detail of each item category record comprises information common to all inventory records below the item category record in the hierarchy; and

inventory records defining a third level of detail corresponding to instances of inventory item types referenced by the set of item category records, wherein the third level of detail of each inventory record in the hierarchy describes distinct inventory instances of item types than that of another inventory record;

matching concurrently, on the computing device, the multiple requests for reservation with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting from instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation action request;

generating, by the computing device, the results of matching the reservation action request with inventory data, wherein the results include:

a reservation transaction record corresponding to the user request for reservation;

one or more reservation item records based on the reservation transaction record and the matched inventory data; and

one or more reservation inventory records corresponding to instances of data of the matched inventory data; and

transmitting, by the computing device, results of the matching.

64. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable components for processing reservation of one or more inventory items, comprising:

a data store for storing the inventory data, wherein the inventory data is organized in accordance with a three-level hierarchy and wherein the three-level hierarchy includes:

at least one group record defining a first level of detail for inventory information, wherein the first level of detail of each group record comprises information common to all item category records and inventory records below the group record in the hierarchy;

a set of item category records defining a second level of detail that is associated to a referenced group record and corresponds to types of inventory items for the referenced group, wherein the second level of detail of each item

category record comprises information common to all inventory records below the item category record in the hierarchy; and

inventory records defining a third level of detail corresponding to instances of inventory item types referenced by the set of item category records, wherein the third level of detail of each inventory record in the hierarchy describes distinct inventory instances of item types than that of another inventory record;

a reservation transaction component operable to obtain reservation information based on matching user reservation requests for inventory items, wherein matching includes selecting from instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the user reservation requests; and

a result generation component operable to generate the results of matching reservation requests with inventory data, wherein the results include:

a reservation transaction component corresponding to the user reservation request,

one or more reservation item components corresponding to instances of inventory identified in the matched inventory data, and

one or more reservation inventory components corresponding to instance data of the inventory items identified in the reservation inventory records.

Applicants respectfully submit that Acebo et al. and Borders et al., alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the limitations cited in amended Claims 27, 50, and 64 for the reasons elaborated in relation to Claim 1 above. In particular, Acebo et al. and Borders et al. fail to teach or suggest, in the context of other recitations of the claims, the limitation "matching, by the computing device, the user request for reservation of one or more inventory items with the inventory data, wherein matching includes selecting from instances of inventory data from the three-level inventory information to correspond to the reservation request," as recited in amended Claims 27, 50, and 64. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 27, 50, and 64 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and allowance of the claims.

Claim 36 depends from Claim 27 and includes all of the limitations of Claim 27, as well as other limitations of particular utility. Claims 45-49 depend from Claim 64 and include all of the limitations of Claim 64, as well as other limitations of particular utility. For at least the reasons stated above in regard to Claims 27 and 64, applicants submit that Claims 36 and 45-49 are patentably distinguished over Acebo et al. and Borders et al. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 36 and 45-49 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of the claims.

C. Rejection of Claims 2-7, 11-23, 29-35, 37-41, 43, 44, and 51-61 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 2-7 and 11-23 depend from Claim 1 and include all of the limitations of Claim 1, as well as other limitations of particular utility. Claims 29-35 and 37-41 depend from Claim 27 and include all of the limitations of Claim 27, as well as other limitations of particular utility. Claims 43 and 44 depend from Claim 64 and include all of the limitations of Claim 64, as well as other limitations of particular utility. Claims 51-61 depend from Claim 50, and include all of the limitations of Claim 50, as well as other limitations of particular utility. For at least the reasons stated above in regard to Claims 1, 27, 50, and 64, applicants submit that Claims 2-7, 11-23, 29-35, 37-41, 43, 44, and 51-61 are patentably distinguished over Acebo et al. and Borders et al. Applicants further submit that the remaining cited art, Schiff et al., Goheen, Patel, or Sehr, alone or in combination, do not overcome these deficiencies in the combined teachings of Acebo et al. and Borders et al. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 2-7, 11-23, 29-35, 37-41, 43, 44, and 51-61 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of the claims.

D. No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, applicants are not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that applicants have made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

E. Co-Pending Applications of Assignee

Applicants wish to draw the Examiner's attention to the following co-pending applications of the present application's assignee.

Application No.: 09/932,263
Filing Date: August 17, 2001

Docket No.	Serial No.	Title	Filed
EXIN.009A	09/932,441	System and Method for Managing Inventory	August 17, 2001

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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